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The 'Right To Know' Bill

Republican Robert Quigley's appeal for a "right to know" by the public came at a most opportune time when national charges on the same subject were being lodged by the Republican flagbearer for 1964, Sen. Barry Goldwater.

While Quigley's appeal for immediate action by the House of Representatives on a pending "Right to Know" Information Bill (No. 1686) may have been original, it is probably a subject for Republican candidates throughout the nation.

Since John F. Kennedy's "boo-boo" over the Bay of Pigs Invasion and the subsequent charges by press agencies and the public over secret government operations, especially by the Central Intelligence Agency the "Right to Know" proposition has been embroiled in sub-committee after sub-committee in Washington. But each administration since 1946 has been ultra - secretive on news policies.

Quigley's charges that "The present Administration has practiced news management to a frightening degree" were echoed this week.

and when Sen. Goldwater charged that it was two days before the U.S. public was made aware of a third Tonkin Gulf crisis.

Quigley has urged passage by the House of the Information Bill (it passed the Senate July 31). The bill before the House is more specific in outlining what information can be withheld from the press than is the present law -- passed in 1946 -- which deals mainly in vague generalities and is open to wide interpretation. The pending bill also gives citizens the right to take a government official to court for wrongfully withholding information -- a provision not in the present law.

There are sufficient safeguards in the pending bill which would allow for non-release of classified material involving national security and information given to the government by individuals in personal confidence.

We, as does Mr. Quigley, hope that the rush to adjourn Congress does not mean the shelving of this needed bill onto some dusty corner shelf in the capitol.